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SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR REPLAYS DOS SANTOS' NEGATIVE
VIEWS ON AFRICOM

REF: 07 LUANDA 1207

Classified By: Ambassador Dan Mozena for Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) During a January 14 meeting, Portuguese Ambassador to Angola Francisco Telles told Ambassador Mozena that President Dos Santos raised AFRICOM in the context of a discussion on Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) with Portugal's Minister of Defense, Nuno Teixeira during the latter's visit to Angola in mid-October 2007. According to Tellez, as the conversation turned to training for PKOs, Dos Santos mentioned AFRICOM, but dismissed it due to "concerns about what AFRICOM is," adding that "SADC has a common position against AFRICOM." Tellez told Mozena that GRA attitudes toward AFRICOM had not changed after the visit of AFRICOM Commander General William Ward in December of 2007 (reftel), when Ward met with the second string leadership of the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Relations, as the principals were out of the city. Similar concerns about AFRICOM were expressed by the GRA during the December 14-19 visit of Portugal's Speaker of the Parliament (Note: the Speaker met with several high-level officials, including President Dos Santos, but Tellez did not identify the source of the GRA's continuing concerns over AFRICOM).

¶2. (C) We are disappointed that our message on AFRICOM has not successfully reached the highest levels of the GRA. We will revise (with AFRICOM assistance) a brief paper - in Portuguese - that succinctly defines AFRICOM and its mission. During upcoming meetings with the Ministers of Foreign Relations, Defense, and other key civilian and military officials, we will brief on AFRICOM and its purposes, and leave behind a written explanation of the command. Early high-level AFRICOM re-engagement with the GRA would help our message finally to get through to the leadership. Given Angola's importance to AFRICOM's effectiveness, we will push hard to ensure the GRA really understands AFRICOM.

MOZENA